



## ST. ANNE'S C.E.(VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

'Making Learning a Life Long Friend'

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### Religious Education Policy St Anne's C.E. (V.C.) Primary School

#### *Making Learning a Life Long Friend*

*Core Christian Values: Kindness, Respect, Honesty, Faith, Perseverance,  
Community*

#### **Rationale for RE at St Anne's Primary School**

Religious Education (RE) plays a central role in defining the school's distinctive Christian character. We see that Christian faith informs all aspects of our life together and commits us to a search for truth. The subject is a core subject within the school's curriculum. It has a vital role in developing and deepening pupils understanding of Christianity, in all its forms, and fostering appreciation and understanding of other faith traditions.

In the Church of England document, '**Making a difference? A review of Religious Education in Church of England schools 2014**' recommends that the RE curriculum in all schools should,

*".....ensure it provides a more coherent, progressive and challenging approach to the teaching of Christianity within the context of the wider exploration of the diversity of religion and belief in the modern world"*

*".....explore ways of extending pupils' ability to think theologically and engage in theological enquiry as part of their learning in RE"*

#### **RE Statement of Entitlement**

RE teaching at St Anne's CE (VC) Primary school will be in line with the recommendations of the **Statement of Entitlement for Church Schools**, published by the Church of England Education Office (June 2016). Christianity will, therefore, be no less than two thirds of RE curriculum time. The teaching of Christianity is core to the teaching of RE in this Church of England school. However, as a Church school we have a duty to foster an accurate and increasing understanding of world religions and worldviews. As a result, pupils will gain greater insight into the world in which they are growing up. They will also learn to appreciate the faith of others and develop a deeper understanding of their own ideas and beliefs. These outcomes must contribute to

harmonious relationships within and between communities, promoting social inclusion and combating prejudice and discrimination.

### **The RE curriculum**

At this school, RE supports and strengthens the vision, ethos and values which are at the heart of what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. The importance placed on the development of the whole child spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in the RE curriculum

Our RE teaching also follows the legal requirements of the **Education Reform Act (1988)**, which places RE as part of the basic curriculum; a statutory subject which is an entitlement for all pupils. St Anne's bases its RE provision on the Staffordshire agreed syllabus. In addition, the school uses the Lichfield Diocesan RE Guidelines, Understanding Christianity resources and other appropriate materials to enhance teaching and learning.

At least 5% of curriculum time will be dedicated to meeting explicitly RE objectives, although the subject may be taught across the curriculum when appropriate. Within this teaching allocation at least two thirds of subject content will be allocated to an exploration of the Christian faith, and the concepts, beliefs, teachings and practices that lie at its heart.

We are aware that social studies have revealed an ongoing decline in religious affiliation across the country. Due to this we have adapted our curriculum knowing that there are more pupils without a religious background who need to gain a valid insight into what it means to be a person of faith from a range of faith communities, and how this is lived out in daily life. We also aim to help those pupils who come from a faith background who need to become aware and take account of those who live independently of the guidance of a faith, and of the secular character of the public arena. Our aim is to support pupils as they shape their own values and views as they navigate their way through life.

### **The aims of Religious Education in our school are:**

- To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.
- To enable pupils to know and understand about other major world religions and worldviews, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
- To enable pupils to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of religious texts and teachings and understanding their impact on the lives of believers.
- To develop pupils' abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief, of themselves, the world and human experience. Supporting them in their own search for meaning and purpose in life.
- To explore concepts of love, forgiveness and sacrifice.
- To develop an understanding of religious faith as the search for and expression of truth, and so to consider important human questions, values and concerns.
- To develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.

- To nurture understanding, respect, open-mindedness, self-esteem and inspire lifelong engagement with the study of religions and beliefs.
- To understand how belief can be expressed in a number of different ways, including art, dance, music, ritual celebration and in different cultural settings.

**The outcomes for pupils at the end of their time in our school are that they are able to:**

- Compare and contrast the key beliefs and practices of the religions studied and show how they are connected to believers' lives
- Describe different aspects of belonging to a religion - symbol, story, festival, belief, faith in action, ritual, worship
- Express religious beliefs and ideas with the appropriate language, vocabulary and terminology and describe what they mean
- Ask questions sensitively about the lives of believers and suggest appropriate answers
- Reflect on the decisions people make - including believers - and suggest possible outcomes
- Compare their own experience and identity with others - including believers
- Reflect and empathise with the big questions of life, suggesting some answers / insights
- Be confident to explore their own spirituality and search for truth
- Value the religious journey of faith
- Develop pupils' ability to interpret and appreciate religious imagery and expression

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)**

In addition, the subject contributes to other areas of education and human experience and plays an important part of the wider programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

Spiritual	Widening pupils' vision of themselves and their own experience, within the context of a growing awareness and understanding of God.
Moral	helping each pupil develop their own informed values
Social	helping pupils understand some major forces shaping the values of our society
Cultural	aiding pupils in exploring aspects of their own cultural heritage, and developing positive attitudes towards diversity.

Additional links will be found across the curriculum especially with **personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHE)** and **British values**. RE can also make a positive contribution to enhancing creativity and enjoyment and ensure the well-being of all pupils.

### **The management of RE**

RE is given equal status with other core subjects in staffing, responsibility and resourcing. Pupil achievement in RE should equal or be better than comparable subjects.

As a church school we recognise that it should be a priority to build up staff expertise in RE.

The RE subject leader at St Anne's is Rachel Barnett and she is responsible for:

- producing a scheme of work for the school

- supporting colleagues in the detailed planning and delivery of RE provision
- ensuring Religious Education has status within the school
- keeping in touch with subject developments and disseminating information as appropriate
- auditing and recording current resources, supplementing resource provision when money is available and disseminating this information to staff
- undertaking personal development and subject training and ensuring provision for staff INSET
- monitoring RE provision, practice and outcomes
- ensuring assessment strategies are in place in line with the Agreed Syllabus
- creating the RE Development Plan and ensuring its regular review
- accountability for RE standards in the school
- meet with member of the Diocesan RE advisory team when possible

**In RE pupils will be encouraged / have opportunities to:**

- Think theologically and explore ultimate questions
- Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
- Develop the skills to analyse, interpret and apply the Bible text
- Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none.
- Recognise that faith is a particular way of understanding and responding to God and the world
- Analyse and explain the varied nature and traditions of the Christian community
- Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and world views in their search for God and meaning.
- Reflect sensitively on areas of shared belief and practice between different faiths
- Enrich and expand their understanding of truth
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.
- Express religious ideas with the appropriate language, vocabulary and terminology
- Be confident in expressing and nurturing their own faith journey

**RIGHT TO WITHDRAW -see appendix**

At St Anne's (VC) Primary School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education or collective worship on the grounds of conscience, without giving a reason. Parents wishing to exercise this right are asked to write to the headteacher who will then invite the parents into school to discuss their concerns, clarify the nature of the RE and worship provided by the school and set out the options open to the parents as set out in education law. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects. Where a pupil is withdrawn from RE and do not take part in alternative religious education they will be supervised by an appropriate member of staff whilst doing work set by their parents which will seek to further their knowledge and understanding of their parents beliefs and values.

**Approaches to teaching and learning in Religious Education**

At St Anne's CE (VC) Primary School, RE is delivered in line with the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus (2023) (which develops further the Early Years and Foundation stage) and also the Diocesan guidance 'Understanding Christianity'. (see appendix) Our teaching aims will be achieved by:

- **Exploring** religious beliefs, teachings and practices - so acquiring knowledge and understanding of religious stories, sacred texts, lifestyles, rituals and symbolism that offer insight into religious experience and living within a faith community.
- **Engaging** with fundamental questions - so appreciating the human and religious questions that are raised by life and its experiences, and through which meaning, significance and value are forged, and by expressing and evaluating their personal responses to such questions- so gaining skills to be able to relate the things studied and discussed, to their own experience.
- **Reflecting** on the reality of religious diversity and on the issues raised by living in a diverse world - so developing skills of analysis in relation to prejudice and discrimination together with skills of self-awareness, moral judgement and responsible choice.

In the **Early Years Foundation Stage**, RE forms a valuable part of the educational experience of children throughout the key stage. During the foundation stage, pupils will be taught an increasingly rich knowledge and understanding of religions and world views. They will learn to express and communicate ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and world views. They will gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and world views. Children may begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. They listen to and talk about stories. They may be introduced to religious words and use their senses in exploring religions and beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live.

**In each key stage**, teaching and learning involves an in-depth study of the narrative, beliefs and practices at the heart of Christianity. As a church school, the majority (2/3) of teaching is Christianity. Islam and Judaism are taught throughout the RE curriculum. With other religions being taught through drop down RE days and special visits and visitors.

We believe that Religious Education should be an exciting subject and so we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, drama, discussion, use of ICT (iPad), exploring artefacts, foods, pictures, photographs, visiting places of worship and listening to people from different faith groups. Learning is recorded not only through a range of writing e.g. letters, diaries and recounts, stories, notes, information and explanation writing but also through pictures and artwork, photographs of drama or notes following class discussions. Each class has a big class book where pupil voice, photos and ideas are shown.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All children are given access to the same learning opportunities. Account is taken of children with special educational needs and gifted and talented learners through differentiation of task and outcome and a planned balance of class teaching and group work and providing resources of

different complexity. All pupils should be able to feel secure in their study of Religious Education whatever the religious or non-religious tradition of their home.

### **Dyslexia Friendly Statement**

It is recognised that the difficulties some children with dyslexic tendencies face may make them vulnerable and result in low confidence and self-esteem. This, in turn, may result in unwanted behaviours. Through our dyslexia friendly teaching and learning strategies we enable all children to make progress and achieve success. This minimises pupil frustrations in learning and feelings of 'failure'. Please see our Dyslexia Friendly Policy for more information.

### **Assessment, Recording, Reporting and Monitoring**

We assess children's work in Religious Education by assessing their progress continuously throughout the lesson and asking questions that extend the children's thinking and provide the next challenge. There is teacher assessment against success criteria for learning in each topic. Topics are planned to ensure there are opportunities for greater depth of learning for some children. At the beginning and end of each topic, pupils are assessed against the Age Related Expectations as indicated in the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus (2016). The teaching expectations outlined in the Lichfield Diocese Guidelines for Teaching RE (June 2015) are also used to ensure planning of topics enables pupils to achieve expectations for learning. At the end of each topic, pupils are given time to discuss and review their learning. Parents receive an annual report on their child's progress and achievement in RE. Monitoring of RE provision takes place by the RE co-ordinator in liaison with the Senior Leadership team. This may be through observations, performance management and pupil interviews. This feeds into the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

### **SIAMS**

**St Anne's will receive a Section 48 SIAMS** inspection that will give a judgment on the progress, achievement, teaching, learning and overall effectiveness of RE in the school. The contribution of RE to the school's distinctive Christian character will be assessed as will the impact of RE on SMSC and the way in which the subject is meeting the needs of learners and moving them forward in their personal spiritual journey.

## Appendix

### Guidance for schools and academies on the right to withdrawal from Religious Education March 2017

#### Religious Education

The government guidance *Religious Education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010* states that:

***Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those who withdraw by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over)***

In voluntary controlled schools and academies, religious education must be provided in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus provided by the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) of the local authority in which the school is situated.

In voluntary aided schools and academies, the decision on the content of religious education rests with the Governing Body, and should be in line with the Trust Deeds of the school.

In all forms of church school, the religious education provided should contribute to the Christian character of the school, and this is in aspect of the school's work which is subject to the *Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)*, whether VC, VA or academy.

Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, ***the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship. (Non-statutory Guidance 2010)***

Any parent considering withdrawal must contact the Headteacher to discuss any concerns relating to the policy, provision and practice of religious education at the school.

#### Managing the Right of Withdrawal

It is important that the school makes clear on its website and through other forms of communication, the RE syllabus being taught in school. There needs to be a clear understanding

of the relevance of the RE curriculum and how it respects pupils own beliefs. It is good practice to review requests to withdraw from RE and collective worship annually.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- Whether the parents wish their children to be withdrawn from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it.
- Parents can withdraw their child from a specific activity, such as a visit to a place of worship, and not withdraw their child from the remainder of the RE.
- Where pupils are withdrawn from Re or collective worship, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or incur extra cost.
- Where a pupil has been withdrawn from RE, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This could be provided at the school or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable RE is provided. Outside arrangements are permitted providing the necessary safeguarding procedures are in place and the LA or Trust Board is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from withdrawal will only affect the start or end of a school session. **(Non-statutory Guidance 2010)**

It is important that schools are fully aware of issues surrounding religion, race and culture and ensure that parental right to withdrawal requests to not hamper their responsibilities to ensure equality for all and the promotion of British Values.